

From the Fire Chief

– by Mifflin Township Division of Fire Chief Timothy Taylor

Mifflin Township Division of Fire offers free car seat installation

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be the leading cause of preventable deaths and injuries to children in the United States. As parents, our main goal is to keep our children safe at all times, and we know car seats are an imperative part in accomplishing that goal. Still, although we do our best to be proactive, 73 percent of car seats are not used or installed correctly.

Ohio law requires infants and young children to ride in a child safety seat until they are 4 years old and weigh at least 40 pounds. Children ages 4 to 8 who are no longer in a car seat must use a booster seat until they reach 4'9" tall.

To help ensure your most precious cargo is safe in motor vehicles, follow these helpful tips.

Right seat - Check the label on your car seat to make sure it is appropriate for your child's age, weight and height. Like milk, your car seat has an expiration date. Just double check the label on your car seat to make sure it is still safe.

Right place - Kids are VIPs, just ask them. We know all VIPs ride in the back seat, so keep all children in the back seat until they are 13.

Right direction - You want to keep your child in a rear-facing car seat as long as possible, usually until about age 2. When he or she outgrows the seat, move your child to a forward-facing car seat. Make sure to attach the top tether after you tighten, and lock the seat belt or lower anchors.

Inch test - Once your car seat is installed, give it a good shake at the base. Can you move it more than an inch side-to-side or front to back? A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch.

Pinch test - Make sure the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check car seat manual). Now, with the chest clip placed at armpit level, pinch the strap at your child's shoulder. If you are unable to pinch any excess webbing, you are good to go.

If you are having even the slightest trouble, have questions or concerns, Mifflin Township Division of Fire employs a certified child passenger safety technician who is willing to help or even double check your car seat at no charge. The technician does nearly 200 installations per year, and the service is available to anyone not just Mifflin Township residents. Call (614) 471-0542 to schedule an appointment, or go to www.mifflin-oh.gov for more information.

